



CONGRESSMAN

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Washington Report



Second District—Tennessee

August 2005

LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

✓ **Busy Session**

The House has been very busy this year and has passed a number of major bills. Three important bills already passed by both the House and Senate and signed into law by the President are a Bankruptcy reform law, the Class Action Fairness Act, and an Energy bill. The bankruptcy bill will save the average consumer approximately \$500 a year, according to the main retail federation. The class action legislation is designed to stop a very small group of lawyers from making millions while the people they represent get pennies. The Energy bill provides incentives to try to decrease our dependence on foreign oil. The House also passed numerous other bills, including bills to reform the Postal Service and make it more business-like, to permanently repeal the death tax, to allow small businesses to join association health plans, and to give increased compensation to veterans and their dependents and survivors.

✓ **Highway Bill**

The House and Senate both passed a major highway bill, which was also signed into law by the President. Tennessee will receive an average of \$797 million a year under this bill. In addition to the formula funding, because of my seniority on the Transportation Committee, I was able to direct \$65.5 million of extra project money into the District, and the Senators together added another \$54.6 million. This \$120.1 million in additional special funding was four or five times what the average district received. As a few examples, our office directed \$8,527,000 to the Knoxville Transit Center, \$8,000,000 to the National Transportation Research Center, \$5,200,000 for an overpass at Highways 321 and 11 in Loudon County, \$800,000 for a pedestrian bridge in Alcoa, \$1,500,000 for work on SR 35 in Seymour, \$4,606,000 to widen SR 30 from Athens to Etowah, \$6,200,000 to widen SR 62 in Knox County, \$5,000,000 for work on SR 33 in Monroe County, \$3,500,000 for a new exit on I-75 in Athens, \$1,440,000 for work on

Campbell Station Road in Knox County, and over \$500,000 for safety improvements at railroad crossings and intersections in Niota, Lenoir City, Philadelphia, Sweetwater, Athens, and Knoxville. In addition, I secured \$7,500,000 and Sen. Alexander directed an additional \$10,000,000 for work on the Foothills Parkway in Blount County. I know that some people do not like all this road work, but it has to be done. Just think what it would be like if the interstate in West Knoxville was still just two lanes. Also, we got money in a highway bill many years ago to widen and improve Highway 411 through Blount, Monroe and McMinn Counties. That highway was very dangerous and many were killed and injured, and the work made that road much safer. Our location and growth have many positives, but they mean we have a lot of traffic, and we will always need quite a bit of this type of work. The U.S. Department of Transportation predicts that Tennessee will have the eighth highest freight traffic in the Nation by 2020.

✓ **Bad Decision**

I have spoken twice on the floor of the House about and am supporting legislation to try to reverse the 5-4 U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Kelo case from Connecticut concerning the taking of peoples' homes. This decision has been criticized by both liberals and conservatives, and there is a real revolt going on all over the Country in opposition to it. As both Justices O'Connor and Thomas said in their dissents, this decision, if allowed to stand, will be most harmful to low and middle income people. Throughout East Tennessee, huge amounts of land have been taken over the years mainly from poor people whose families would be rich today if they still had their beautiful land. The federal government already owns over 30% of U.S. land, and state and local governments and quasi-governmental agencies own another 20%. Yet you can never satisfy governments' appetite for money or

land; they always want more. With so much land in public ownership and government spending always going up, governments keep raising taxes on the remaining private land or trying to put higher-tax-paying developments on land in their jurisdictions. The federal government at all levels needs more people who will not go along with higher taxes and more government land grabs. Private property is very important to both our freedom and our prosperity.

✓ **Legislative Law**

While in law school, we were taught in Legislative Law class that judges were supposed to pay great deference to actions of Congress and state and local legislative bodies and that the main goal of the courts was to try to determine legislative intent. This was because judges were supposed to be judges, not super legislators whose main goal was to try to overrule legislative actions whenever given a chance to do so. Courts were not supposed to be that political. Our Founding Fathers tried to give us a government with a balance of powers, not one in which the judicial branch was superior to or more powerful than the legislative and executive branches. Thomas Jefferson once wrote in a letter: "You seem to consider the Federal judges as the ultimate arbiters of all constitutional questions, a very dangerous doctrine indeed and one which would place us under the despotism of an oligarchy. Our judges are as honest as other men and not more so. They have with others the same passions for the party, for power and the privilege of their corps. Their power is the more dangerous, as they are in office for life and not responsible as the other functionaries are to the elective control. The Constitution has erected no such single tribunal."

✓ **Big Government**

An article in *Newsweek* a little over a year ago said that half the people of the world have to get by on less than \$2.00

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a day. A few months ago, a column in the *Knoxville News Sentinel* said half the people in the world do not even have a second pair of shoes. God has blessed every Nation with natural beauty and/or natural resources that could make that country rich if it had the right leadership and allowed private ownership of property and free enterprise. However, all over the world, people have had big governments forced on them or they have fallen for the myth that government could solve all problems and have voted in big government proponents. All big governments have done is to slowly wipe out the middle class. Big government primarily helps government contractors and the bureaucrats who work for the government. The supposed "beneficiaries" just get the crumbs.

✓ Identity Theft

By far the fastest growing crime in America is identity theft. One expert said recently that if you have not been victimized by this yet, you soon will be. More people will be hit by this crime this year than by home burglaries. I intend to support all legislation which will greatly increase the penalties for this crime. In addition, I will strongly oppose the movement toward a paperless, cashless society, because this would further our loss of privacy and make identity theft even more of a problem.

✓ Immigration

One of the most frequent comments I hear from my constituents is strong opposition to so much illegal immigration. I certainly cannot blame people for wanting to come here, and I admire the work ethic of those who come here legally from other countries. On the other hand, some have estimated that half the people of the world want to come to the U.S. and would do so tomorrow if we simply opened our borders. Our hospitals, roads, schools, and overall infrastructure could not handle such a rapid, massive influx of people. We have to have a system of orderly, legal immigration and strictly enforce that system. Rush Limbaugh said recently that if you do not have borders, you do not have a country. *The New York Times* reported that a Mexican-American County Commissioner in Idaho was leading a crusade against illegal immigration there. Commissioner Robert Vasquez said his county should be declared a disaster area because illegal immigrants were overwhelming public services, bringing gang violence, spreading tuberculosis, and demanding rights that should not be given to non-citizens.

✓ Student Records

The Department of Education is seeking approval for a plan to gather sweeping amounts of information on every college student. This so-called "student unit record tracking" envisions individual bar code identifications to track scholarships, courses, degree plans, Social Security numbers, and other information. The *Seattle Post Intelligencer*, the largest-circulation newspaper in the northwest, called this plan "Big Brother on campus," and said, in addition to privacy concerns, this could cost colleges and universities an extra \$1 billion in bureaucratic reporting requirements. This is a plan that hopefully will be stopped before it starts.

✓ Oil Prices

The price of oil went over the \$60 a barrel level for the first time on June 27. One major Wall Street firm has said oil may go to over \$100 a barrel. If it does, this could mean gas prices of three to four dollars a gallon and very serious consequences for every sector of our economy. Yet wealthy environmentalists continue to oppose drilling for more oil anyplace in the U.S. I wonder sometimes if some of these groups that oppose U.S. oil production are funded in part by OPEC or other foreign oil interests. President Clinton vetoed a plan to drill on only 2,000 acres of the 19.8 million acre Arctic plain of Alaska. We would have a million barrels of oil a day more if he had not done so. We also have huge deposits of oil off of coastal areas, where we could produce it in an environmentally-safe way just as we have been doing for years off the coasts of Louisiana and Texas. We have not opened a new refinery for over 29 years due to environmental rules, regulations, and red tape. All this really hurts the poor, lower income and working people of this Country most of all.

✓ Chinese Challenge

I recently joined 40 other members of Congress in writing to the Secretary of the Treasury in opposition to the purchase of Unocal, one of our largest oil producers, by the China National Offshore Oil Corporation, a company 70% owned by the Chinese government. Everyone says that we need to be less dependent on foreign oil. Yet some extremists will agree but still oppose any additional U.S. oil production. The Chinese are coming on like gangbusters in almost every area. Fortunately, this purchase offer was later withdrawn. If it had gone through, we would have become even more likely to be held hostage by foreign-owned oil companies. These companies know that

environmental radicals will stop any new U.S. production, so they have little incentive to hold down oil prices. Our letter to Secretary Snow said, in part: "Energy security is a matter of significant and ever increasing importance for the United States. In particular, we are very concerned about China's ongoing and proposed acquisition of energy assets around the world, including assets of U.S.-based energy and oil companies." The letter also said because of China's "aggressive strategy to acquire offshore assets.... It will become increasingly difficult for U.S.-based companies to compete for scarce energy resources on the world market against China's state-owned and/or controlled energy companies." The Treasury Department has the authority to prevent or at least put conditions on this type of purchase through its Committee on Foreign Investment in the United States.

✓ Trade Deficit

China was able to offer an inflated price for Unocal in large part because of the huge trade surplus the Chinese have rung up in recent years from the U.S. Our overall trade deficit is running \$55 to \$60 billion a month, a figure that would have been unbelievable as recently as five or ten years ago. It is approximately \$165 billion a year just with China, and probably headed much higher. Unfortunately, we have destroyed much of our manufacturing in the U.S. in recent years by purchasing practically everything from foreign companies, especially from Chinese firms. The Chinese are probably amazed that we have not been tougher in our trade negotiations. We should tell the Chinese that we want to be friends and we want to trade with them, but we cannot sustain these huge trade deficits for much longer, and that they need to start finding some things they can buy from us to bring our trade more into balance. If they will not do this, they need to be told that we will be forced to renegotiate our trade agreement.

✓ World Trade

The U.S. exported over one trillion dollars worth of goods last year, and with a Nation and economy as big as ours, we must have a great amount of trade with other nations. However, the National Association of Business Economists recently predicted that U.S. growth will slow because of a projected trade deficit this year of \$662 billion. We should have our own trade agreements with countries, however, and not give up our sovereignty and subject ourselves to rulings by the World Trade Organization. The WTO is mainly a concession to and for the convenience of very large multi-

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national companies. Conservatives have traditionally been the biggest opponents of world government, believing that government was less expensive and more compassionate if it was smaller and closer to the people. The WTO is a form of world government, with very great power. I spoke on the House Floor criticizing the WTO ruling that Utah could not ban internet gambling within its own borders because it infringed on the rights of Antigua and Barbuda. I said who would have ever believed the people of Antigua and Barbuda would have more control over what went on within the state of Utah than the people of Utah themselves. This is an example of what the WTO has gotten us into, and I recently voted (unfortunately with only 85 others) to get out of that organization. However, today federal trade policies are controlled by big government neo-cons who seem to favor one-world solutions or agreements. We could and should have plenty of trade without being controlled by the WTO.

✓ **Tougher Policies**

Many years ago, Congress passed an amendment I introduced to give federal juries the option of handing down a death sentence in a case involving the kidnapping and murder of a minor. Now, the Nation seems to be having an epidemic of child sex cases, some even involving deaths. These are the kinds of cases on which I was toughest during my 7 and a half years as a Judge. The rate of recidivism among pedophiles is unfortunately extremely high. These people need to be given very long sentences. We also need tougher policies against Islamic terrorists. The U.S. treats prisoners more humanely than almost any other country.

✓ **Congressional Pensions**

I have received many letters and questions on radio programs or at events around the District about Congressional pensions. Apparently, some place on the internet has very false information that members of Congress become eligible for lifetime pensions equal to, or higher than, fulltime Congressional salaries after only one day in office. Members are eligible to receive 1.7% a year for the first 20 years, and 1% for each year above that (17% for 10 years, 34% at 20 years, 44% at 30 years, etc.). Only about 15% of members of Congress serve longer than 20 years. The pension starts at age 62 or after 20 years if above age 55, but due to shorter life expectancy of members, only 411 former members of Congress now draw these pensions (compared to 7,000 retired admirals and generals). Also, members of Congress pay into Social

Security the same as everyone else and receive the same formula benefits. Nor do members receive free health care, free haircuts, or free gym memberships (The House gym has a yearly fee, and I am not a member). I feel very fortunate to have my job and am very grateful for the pension possibility – It is just not nearly as high as some have been led to believe.

✓ **Drug Warning**

The FDA has just announced that it plans to add warnings about possible psychiatric side effects to the labels of Concerta and Ritalin and similar drugs. These side effects include visual hallucinations, suicidal thoughts, psychotic behavior, and aggression or violence. I have been concerned about these drugs since reading a few years ago that they are prescribed in the U.S. at a rate six or seven times higher than any other developed nation. Today, almost four million children in the U.S. are taking these drugs. Some may need them, but I seriously doubt American children need them at the rate they are being prescribed – much, much more than in any other nation. Hopefully, these new warnings will cause doctors, parents, and grandparents to take a long, hard, second look at these very strong drugs.

✓ **Complacency**

Several years ago, Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan, a Democrat from New York, said: “We have been defining deviancy down; accepting as a part of life what we once found repugnant.” We seem to be accepting many things today that our Founding Fathers and even most in much more recent times would not have accepted. First and foremost, we have allowed ourselves and our families to be taxed at much higher rates than those against which our founders rebelled. Most Americans throughout history would now be shocked that we accept court rulings hostile to religion; government taking of so much private property; the sleaze on television, in the movies, and on the internet; loss of privacy due to our worship of computers; and demands that government solve all problems from the cradle to the grave (always the most inefficient, expensive way to solve any problem).

✓ **Global Rules**

For most of its history, the U.S. took pride in being special, unique, perhaps a little different. Three or four years ago, a teacher at a school in Monroe County asked me, “When are we going to move into the 21st Century and adopt the metric system?” It shocked her a little when I said, “Oh, I hope we never do.” First, the overwhelming majority of our

people do not want it. Second, this change would come only after a very great expenditure. Third, the big, multi-national companies want it so they can use the same labels and measurements all over the world, but they do not really need more government help – they get too much already. This does not mean that we have to or should or even can resist progress. But it is also good to have at least a little stability, continuity, and tradition. We should not constantly change everything. One of the worst arguments, which I have heard in regard to mandated benefits and other things, is that we should do something because most other countries do it that way. I do not want to see a bland, homogenized world in which every country, every person is supposed to look, act, think and talk alike.

✓ **Impersonal Society**

I have always opposed world government with its one-world laws, rules and regulations because of the huge cost, but also because it is so impersonal. Big government, especially on an international level, is too far removed from control by the people. We would see more variety, uniqueness, creativity, diversity, if we solved more of our problems locally and made more purchases from locally-owned businesses. The July/August issue of *The Saturday Evening Post* quotes author Peter Whybrow in part: “In America the cultural transition from a socio-economic order built on the comfort of a personal relationship with the butcher and the banker to an impersonal commercial world driven by automated credit card transactions and the ATM machine is now nearing completion.’ The result is there is no place left for us to ‘build personal relationships and learn about life. The producer and consumer are now divorced from each other, and they almost never meet or converse.’ Not only don’t they live in the same town, they may not even live on the same continent... ‘What was once community in America is in danger of becoming nostalgia, the stuff of Norman Rockwell paintings.’”

✓ **Foreign Ownership**

In the 1960s, foreigners, primarily foreign central banks, owned less than five percent of our national debt. At the end of last year it was up to 44% and headed higher. This is due to our many years of huge deficit spending and a national debt now of almost eight trillion dollars, a figure so big it is humanly incomprehensible. The Congress recently voted to raise the debt limit to nine trillion. This is part of what is behind the Chinese government’s bid to purchase oil giant

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Unocal. Nationally-syndicated columnist Bruce Bartlett wrote recently: "Growing bond market nervousness may signal an end to the free lunch Americans have enjoyed the last three years, where foreigners have essentially financed our budget deficit. This has kept interest rates low, fueling a boom in the housing market and allowed legislators to believe there are no economic consequences to massive budget deficits. But if foreigners even slow their purchases of Treasury bonds, this bubble could burst very suddenly, leading to sharply higher interest rates almost overnight."

✓Partisan Feelings

Many people around the Country have the impression that Democrats and Republicans in Congress either hate or at least strongly dislike each other. Nothing could be further from the truth. Almost all members get along very well with each other and have close friendships on both sides of the aisle. Many bills pass with large bi-partisan majorities. The Water Resources Development Act, a \$10 billion bill that I sponsored and managed, passed by a vote of 406-14. Members on both sides of the aisle deserve some criticism, however, about federal spending. The minority has been very strong in its criticism that the majority has not been fiscally conservative enough and has increased both national debt and deficits. They are right about that. However, these same Democrats will then criticize Republicans for not spending enough on every program that is in existence. It is not fiscally conservative – in fact, it is fiscally reckless – to advocate big increases for every department or agency when our national debt is almost eight trillion dollars.

✓Horrendous Waste

Because of a law passed late in 2002, all federal departments and agencies are required to estimate the amount of improper payments to beneficiaries, employees, or contractors. Our Government Reform Committee on July 20 held a hearing about this. The agencies found that more than 60% of government outlays for fiscal year 2004, or \$1.4 trillion out of \$2.3 trillion, is at risk for a significant level of improper payments. The initial investigation found right off the bat that \$45.1 billion had been improperly paid. This was obviously the tip of the iceberg, because these are estimates from the federal agencies themselves. One of the largest programs — Medicaid, at \$175 billion — could not even be measured. Two days before our hearing, *The New York Times* completed

a year-long investigation of the Medicaid program in New York and found billions in fraud and abuse. The chief investigator estimated at least 10% in criminal fraud and another 20% in improper overpayments. If this figure is nation-wide, this would mean over \$50 billion in the Medicaid program alone that was not included in the \$45.1 billion mentioned above. Gigantic bureaucracies just do not work efficiently, economically, or even oftentimes legally. The only way to stop these improper payments is to drastically decrease the size, power, and funding of the federal government and have most government agencies funded and controlled entirely at the local level. Unfortunately, we will not do this. Federal programs are almost entirely run by unelected, basically unaccountable people who are protected by the Civil Service System, and thus nothing is ever done even when we discover horrendous waste like we heard about at our hearing. Probably, the best we can hope for is that the new Improper Payments law will embarrass some of these agencies so much that they will start doing a better job.

✓Defense Waste

One of the most honorable ways anyone can serve this Country is in our Nation's armed forces. I have great admiration and respect for those who serve. On the other hand, the military is by far our biggest bureaucracy, and like any gigantic bureaucracy, it wastes many billions of dollars each year. It would be unpatriotic and a real disservice to our taxpayers not to speak out against this waste. If we do not criticize waste in the military because of excessive patriotic fervor, this waste will inevitably grow. The Government Accountability Office (GAO) recently reported that the Pentagon has misspent \$35 billion in Iraq and that another \$9 billion could not be accounted for at all. In a separate hearing, the GAO also reported that the Department of Defense (DoD) wasted \$2.2 billion replacing items that were in new, unused, or excellent condition. On one occasion, DoD sold 172 pairs of new cold weather boots valued collectively at more than \$23,330 for just \$69 (not \$69 each, \$69 total). That is less than the cost of one pair of shoes. GAO also found that DoD purchased at least \$400 million of identical items during this time instead of using the materials available. It is humanly impossible to really comprehend how much one billion is. However, a person would have to make \$100,000 a year for 10,000 years to make one billion. David Walker, Comptroller General of the U.S., has been testifying in front of

many Congressional Committees, including one I am on, warning about what one columnist called the financial "tsunami" we'll see as baby boomers retire. Mr. Walker says the Defense Department has "absolutely atrocious financial management. If it were a business, it would be out of business."

✓Long War

Even many who supported the war in Iraq were upset when Secretary Rumsfeld said a couple of months ago that we might have to stay there 10 or 12 more years. This reaction has led the Pentagon to leak one plan that would reduce our troop level substantially, to the 40,000 to 60,000 range, by the end of next year. Columnist William F. Buckley, Jr., wrote a few months ago that the time had come to get out. Later, on June 17, he wrote in another column: "A respect for the power of the United States is engendered by our success in engagements in which we take part. A point is reached when tenacity conveys not steadfastness of purpose but misapplication of pride. It can't reasonably be disputed that if in the year ahead the situation in Iraq continues about as it has done in the past year, we will have suffered more than another 500 soldiers killed. Where there had been skepticism about our venture, there will then be contempt."

✓College Tuition

Most young people probably think the federal student loan program is one of the best things that ever happened to them. Actually, college tuition and fees were unbelievably cheap before the program started. Almost all students could afford college without going into debt at all. Now, college costs have gone up at two or three or four times the rate of inflation almost every year since the loan program started more than 40 years ago. Costs simply explode on anything the federal government subsidizes. College administrators were apparently able to tamp down opposition to fee increases because of the availability of easy loans. Richard Vedder, author of a new book titled *Going Broke By Degree: Why College Costs So Much*, discusses much of this and points out that costs at many schools now exceed over six months worth of income for the average family. Another major factor leading to rapidly-escalating tuition is that many professors apparently do not like to teach. It has become more fashionable in academic circles to do research and to write. Six hours a week in the classroom is considered a heavy load. More and more teaching is left to graduate assistants. However, if a university is putting research and writing first, instead of teaching, it is

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putting the professors first instead of the students. This trend has also led to classes that are far too large. Parents need to start asking how large classes are and how many are taught by professors rather than by graduate students. If increases in college and university costs do not slow down to approximately the rate of inflation, as they increased before the federal loan program, Congress will be forced to take action.

✓ **New Militarism**

On July 23, a commentator on the Fox Network said that our military budget should be tripled. This may have been the most ridiculous statement I have heard in all my years in Congress. We already spend as much as all the rest of the world combined on defense. Yet you can never satisfy any agency's desire for more money. President Eisenhower, a man who loved the military, warned us against the military-industrial complex at a time our military budget was roughly one thousand percent lower than today. Dr. Andrew Bacevich, a West Point graduate and Vietnam veteran, has written a new book titled *The New American Militarism*. He quotes journalist Gregg Easterbrook, who wrote that "the extent of American military superiority has become almost impossible to overstate." Much of this excessive defense spending has less to do with the threats we face than with the lust for more money, power and prestige of those at the highest levels of our government and defense contractors. Professor Bacevich clearly comes down on the side of traditionally American and conservative values rather than big government neo-conservatives who believe the U.S. should be the policeman of the world: "The American public's ready acceptance of the prospect of war without foreseeable end and of a policy that abandons even the pretense of the United States fighting defensively or viewing war as a last resort shows clearly how the process of militarization has advanced.... (S)eeing armed force as the preeminent expression of state power and military institutions as the chief repositories of civic virtue, the expectation that revolutionary advances in military technology might offer a tidy solution to complex problems, the outsourcing of defense to a professional military elite, the erosion of civilian control — distorts if it does not altogether nullify important elements of the American birthright.... Princes, armies, and perpetual war defined Europe. The absence of these things was to provide a point of departure for defining America. Determined to preserve their freedom and their experiment in

popular self-government, Americans knew instinctively that militarism was perhaps the foremost threat to their prospect of doing so." In other words, the view of our Founders was that war, though sometimes necessary, should be fought only rarely and reluctantly, not permanently and eagerly.

✓ **Education Battle**

Several states in every region have voted to get out of or limit parts of the No Child Left Behind law. The Secretary of Education wrote the State of Utah a letter saying its action appeared to be "designed to provoke non-compliance with federal law and needless confrontation," and threatened to withhold \$76 million in federal funds. The Utah bill had passed its House 66-7 and its Senate 25-3. The great majority of people used to believe in local control of schools. President Reagan even believed in abolishing the federal Department of Education. The No Child Left Behind law was a one-size fits all federal solution to problems mainly occurring in a few big cities. The schools in East Tennessee have not broken down and do not need the same rules, regulations, and red tape and oversight as schools in places like Philadelphia, New York, Chicago or Washington, D.C.

✓ **Foreign Policy**

No matter which party has the White House, Presidential advisors on foreign policy on the National Security Council and in the State and Defense Departments will always urge getting involved in almost all foreign political and/or military disputes. Everyone wants to be regarded as a "world statesman," and they want more funding. They would not last long in high-level positions if they continually advised not to get involved. Some foreign policy "experts" will sarcastically, even meanly, say haughtily that the choice is between intervention and isolation. However, this is a great over-simplification and is not true. We should have free and fair trade with all nations, if possible, and we should have tourism and educational and cultural exchanges. We should help out during humanitarian crises. We should welcome officials from other countries to come here at their expense to get advice from our government officials. But we simply cannot afford, either financially or diplomatically, to continue to take sides in almost all of the religious, social, or military disputes around the world.

✓ **Foreign Aid**

The elitists who have controlled our foreign policy for many years realized a

long time ago that foreign aid was not popular. So they just started doing it through almost every department and agency of the federal government. They have very falsely said that foreign aid is just a little over one percent of the budget. Actually, we spend several hundred billions each year in other countries, much of it through the Defense Department. Probably half of what we are doing in Iraq is just pure foreign aid, free medical care, rebuilding roads, schools, power plants, water systems, railroads, ports, training and paying police and judges, even setting up witness protection and small business loan programs. One radio news report recently said that the F.B.I. has more offices in other countries than it does in the U.S. Israel has now asked for \$2.2 billion to move out of the West Bank and Gaza Strip, in addition to the billions we already give and have given for economic and military aid. A CNN poll of several thousand on the Lou Dobbs show one night in July found 95% of Americans opposed to this. I have cast many votes in favor of Israel over the years but have voted against foreign aid for all countries. If we are going to be able to pay our military and civil service pensions, Social Security, Medicare and do all the things people want our government to do in the near future, we cannot continue to spend hundreds of billions each year in other countries. We are now almost eight trillion dollars in debt with large deficits each year adding to this. Our money is not unlimited, and we need to start putting our own people first.

✓ **World Government**

Throughout history, conservatives have been the strongest opponents of world government, or even big government in general because of its cost, distance, arrogance, and lack of control by the people. They have always believed that when it comes to government, small and local is better because it is less wasteful, and more easily controlled by the people it is governing. Now, however, some conservatives are supporting the biggest expansion of government power ever though our military adventures around the world and the PATRIOT Act and "security" measures throughout the government at home. True conservatives should not support world government, even if run by the U.S., simply because it is currently politically fashionable to say we are somehow obligated to do all these things because we are "the world's only superpower." We should ask ourselves why, at the very time we are spending so many billions to do good things for people around the world, is there more anti-Americanism than ever before. It is

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because the impression we are giving is that we are attempting to rule the world. One of the more ridiculous statements is that people in other countries hate us because they hate our freedom. Almost all anti-Americanism is because of our interventionist foreign policies, especially in the Middle East. Having said that, nothing, and I mean nothing we have ever done, can morally justify a suicide bombing. People who would kill or maim innocent people with a suicide bomb deserve to burn in Hell.

✓Medical Costs

In the early '90s, I went to an event in Lebanon, Tenn., and the doctor who delivered me came and brought my records. He said he charged \$60 for nine months of care and the delivery, "if they could afford it." Before the government got into medicine in such a big way, medical care was cheap and doctors commonly made house calls. Now, people frequently show or tell me about medical bills of \$20,000 or more after just one day in the hospital. These crazy, out-of-whack costs simply cannot continue to wildly escalate, or the whole system will crash. People will demand that the government take it all over, and that will be the worst possible solution. The problem is that we are paying medical costs through a third-party system, and there is no incentive or ordinary market pressures holding down the costs. Thank goodness we are not paying for food that way. I have voted every time to limit judgments against doctors, but *USA Today* reported that since 2000, malpractice pay outs have gone up only 5.6%, while malpractice insurance premiums have gone up 120%. Insurance companies and others who are getting rich off of the present third-party payer system are about to kill the goose that laid the golden egg. If we paid for medical care the same way we pay for everything else - that is if you could get the government and insurance companies out of the way

- medical costs would be just a tiny fraction of what they are. We are at least attempting some reforms around the edges by passing the bill to allow association health plans and the provision in the prescription drug bill which allows medical savings accounts.

✓Computer Literacy

The use of the phrase "computer literate" has unfortunately caused some people to believe they are well-educated just because they can operate a computer. Several years ago, a computer science professor at Yale stated that we should not let a child touch a computer until high school. He said we should emphasize the basics like reading, writing, math and history first. I know we will continue to teach children to worship computers from probably even pre-school ages. However, it is a commentary on modern society when grandparents will boast about how brilliant their grandchildren are on computers and then complain about young people in stores not being able to make change. Actually, a person can be extremely well-educated by extensive reading and not use a computer at all. I tell young people they have to learn to use computers for jobs, and it is fine with me if they watch some television. However, if they can occasionally pull themselves away from the screens, and do something to help a live human being, their lives will be more meaningful and they will be pleasantly surprised by how much time they have to actually accomplish things.

✓Security

Michael Chertoff, the Secretary of Homeland Security, gave very similar remarks recently both before my Government Reform Committee and to Congressman Wamp's Washington Summit. He said he wanted to have a "secure State, not a security State" and that it is impossible "to protect everybody against every bad thing at

every place at every moment." We all want the Nation to be as safe as possible, but we surely do not want a police state with very little privacy and freedom. We need to be sensible and realize that people are still thousands of times more likely to be killed by a car wreck, or even struck by lightning or win a lottery than to be killed by a terrorist. We still need to build safer highways, find cures for cancer, try to protect retirement incomes, and do all the other things people want government to do. I was very impressed by Secretary Chertoff because government departments usually exaggerate the problems they handle so they can get more funding. The entire process is a lot more about money than it is about security.

✓Conservative Columnist

A few years ago, C-SPAN asked viewers to select their favorite newspaper columnist. Many thousands participated, and the overwhelming favorite was the staunchly conservative Charley Reese. He writes in a plain, down-to-earth style. Two recent examples: 1) "Freedom of religion does not mean freedom from religion. For nearly 200 years, no judge had ever banned prayer from public forums. The stupidity of banning prayer in public schools is shown by the fact that Congress has chaplains, as do the armed forces, not to mention that most public officeholders place their hand on the Bible when they take their oath of office. The purpose of establishing religious freedom was to encourage religion, not stifle it." 2) The war in Iraq was "against a country that was not attacking us, did not have the means to attack us, and had never expressed any intention of attacking us... and for whatever real reason we attacked Iraq, it was not to save America from any danger, imminent or otherwise."

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